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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
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INFO RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000351

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STATE FOR EEB/CBA (DWINSTEAD), NEA/ARP  
COMMERCE FOR COBERG

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [BEXP](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [MU](#)  
SUBJECT: OMAN FY07 BFIF REQUEST

REF: A. 06 STATE 189849  
[1](#)B. MUSCAT 16

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SUMMARY  
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[1](#)1. Following a successful FY06 Business Facilitation Incentive Fund (BFIF) program, continued BFIF assistance will be essential in helping us implement the recently ratified U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA). We plan to use the BFIF program to strengthen our relationship with our Commercial Service (CS) partnership post in the promotion of U.S. exports to Oman, provide trade agreement implementation training for our Economic/Commercial Officer, bolster the effectiveness of the Muscat American Business Council, and promote opportunities and benefits of the FTA. We may request additional BFIF assistance as FTA promotional activities further develop over the course of FY07. End Summary.

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STRONGER TIES WITH CS PARTNER POST  
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[1](#)2. The Embassy's commercial service offerings are largely carried out by a single Commercial Assistant, who has been in her position for two years. Our relationship with our CS partner post is, therefore, crucial in promoting U.S. exports and investment in Oman. As the FTA nears implementation, the Embassy would like to take advantage of this unique opportunity to promote U.S. exports by sending our Commercial FSN to our CS partnership post in Dubai. The purpose of her visit would be to learn how to stage a catalogue show for U.S. products, how to manage a booth at trade expositions, how to better utilize the e-menu programs, and how to better attract Omani participation in international buyer programs. The trip would also enable her to receive further guidance on completing specially-tailored commercial services, such as 'franchise gold key services' and 'international market insights.' The estimated cost of this 2-day proposal is \$724 (\$250 airfare, \$255 lodging, \$182 per diem, \$37 taxi expenses).

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PARTICIPATION IN TRADE IMPLEMENTATION COURSE  
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[1](#)3. As we move into a new era of bilateral trade relations, we expect to see a marked increase in the number of business inquiries regarding the implementation of FTA provisions. Having our Economic/Commercial officer well-versed in trade implementation issues would greatly assist the Embassy in resolving FTA-related concerns brought forward by U.S. businesses. We accordingly seek BFIF assistance in defraying

the lodging and per diem costs of our Economic/Commercial officer in attending FSI's Trade Agreement Implementation course (PE 222). He will use his R R air ticket to cover travel costs to Washington. The estimated cost of this proposal is \$1602 (\$1170 lodging, \$432 per diem).

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PRIMER FOR BUSINESS COUNCIL  
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¶4. The Muscat American Business Council (MABC) plays an important role in promoting stronger ties between the U.S. and Omani business communities. Sponsored by the Embassy, the organization is now in its third year of operation. With the implementation of the FTA, the MABC has the opportunity to play a key role in fostering FTA-related programs for its membership, especially with regard to tariff-free treatment of goods, understanding of rules of origin requirements, and regulatory updates, including the sweeping changes to Oman's labor code.

¶5. Recognizing that the MABC has lacked the independent, institutional capability to carry out such programming for its members, the Executive Council has selected a dynamic individual to become its new executive director. In order for her to quickly address the challenges that face the MABC, the Embassy requests BFIF assistance to bring the executive director of the American Business Council of Dubai and the Northern Emirates (ABCD) to Muscat for a one-day mentoring session. Aside from providing an overview on the operation of a business council, the ABCD executive director would be able to provide best practices on how to better address membership expectations through enhanced program offerings and how to manage an annual meeting, which comes due for the MABC in May. The estimated cost of this 2-day proposal is \$1018 (\$530.40 airfare, \$172 lodging, \$274 per diem, \$41.60 taxi expenses).

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PROMOTING THE FTA  
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¶6. Building upon the December 2006 FTA Awareness Conference, sponsored in part with BFIF monies, the Embassy is working with the Omani government to formulate other FTA promotional activities. One such initiative the Embassy would like to pursue is the publication of a booklet outlining potential benefits of the FTA from research conducted by Booz Allen Hamilton, under contract to the USG under the Middle East Partnership Initiative, in conjunction with the Omani government. The booklet would concisely summarize the findings of the proposed sectoral study, and would be printed in both English and Arabic. The estimated cost to produce 300, 40-page color booklets is \$1700 (\$1180 for publication, \$520 for translation into Arabic).

¶7. The Embassy may request additional BFIF assistance in supporting such endeavors during the balance of FY07.

¶8. The Embassy's point of contact for the BFIF program is Economic/Commercial Officer Brian Grimm, phone (968) 698-989 ext. 332, GSM (mobile) (968) 9945-9887, email: GrimmBM@state.gov.  
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